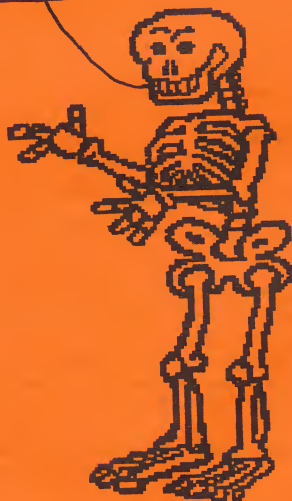# THE ATARI 8-BIT NEWS-PAPER

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Issue 18 - May/June 1994

IS IT THIS WAY
TO D.G.S.?

* QUICK TUTORIAL PART 3

* P.D. REVIEWS

* GAMING COLUMN

* SAMS SHOW REPORT

* A NEW ATARI BBS!

* AND MORE!

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EDITORIAL

by Dean Garraghty

Welcome to issue 18 of the News-Paper! We're still alive and kicking!

First of all a *big* thanks to all those people who came to the SAMS show in April. We were amazed at how well it went. It seems that a show in April was an excellent idea, so much so that there will be another show next April! There was a definite increase in visitors, most of whom arrived bright and early to pick up the bargains! We sold more stuff in the first hour than in the rest of the day! After the first hour our stand was looking bare, and we had to find something else to display! We were lucky enough to have a stack of used hardware and software for sale, which certainly helped to boost sales. Most of this stuff sold itself! Sales of our usual product range was very disappointing, but then we know from past experience that people don't come to shows to buy stuff they can buy any time of the year. They come to buy one-off bargains, and we had plenty of those! So, I am pleased to say that SAMS was a great success for us! For a full review of the show, see my article elsewhere in this issue.

You will also see in this issue that we are asking you to vote on what you consider to be the worst Atari software. Please send your votes. The article to follow in issue 19 depends entirely on your opinions, so please submit your votes and be a part of the News-Paper! See the article on page 12 for more details.

Last issue I mentioned the fact that Atari Classics magazine was no more. It appears, however, that the magazine has been offered to a user group based in California. They will be publishing details in the "last" issue of AC, along with a new subscription form. Offering it to a user group is, in my opinion, not a good idea. A magazine such as AC needs to be treated as a full-time job, not just something that can be knocked up during odd hours after work. This is, I believe, where it has gone wrong in the past. The editor often complained of a lack of time, due to him having a full-time job as well. Oh well, we'll just have to see what comes of all this......

As you will see, most of this issue has been written by myself and Alan Hitchen. Richard has a good excuse for not writing more, as you will read in his gaming column. I have now edited 18 issues of the News-Disk and News-Paper, and I have also written many many articles myself, and I must say that my ideas for new articles are just about dried up! *Please* try and write something for the next issue. Anything! As I have said many times before, we are not looking for a major work of literature! We promise not to poke fun at any mistakes you may make! We only poke fun at Richard's awful spelling (which gets completely edited out by me, but I may decide to write an article headed "Richard Gore's most hilarious spelling mistakes" at some stage in the future!!!). Come on, write something!

Dean Garraghty

Gaming Column

by Richard Gore

I will start this column by first saying that my input into this issue of the News-Paper will be more limited than normal. I am right in the middle of my final revision/exam period, and I feel that after three years of hard work I must make one final effort to come out with a good class of degree. However, I hope this column is of interest to you and hopefully I will be back with more, bigger articles next time.

During the SAMS show in April I found some most unusual software on the Page 6 stand. There were four games all programmed by 'mhs-studios' in Germany and all on disk at £2 each. For that price I couldn't go wrong so I bought them all. They are called Plots, Lightraces, Barkonid and Giga-Blast. All four games are of 1990 vintage and some of them were programmed in Action!, and by the way for all those that don't know, Action! is available once again from CSS and Fine Tooned Engineering in the states for $49.95 including the support disk.

Anyway on with the reviews of the games:

Plots is loosely based on Tetris; you control a character and must shoot patterned blocks across the screen. When they match with a block already on the screen they disappear. That's about all I can tell you really; the documentation is in German although a translation sheet is supplied but it is very brief and doesn't really explain the game enough. The graphics are acceptable but nothing out of the ordinary; sound is mediocre. I believe there is a two player option, but I really couldn't be bothered to try it out! Overall it's not hard to see why this game is not popular over here. If the documentation explained things properly the situation might be different, but as it is I can't recommend this game as one to put on your list, except perhaps of a (bad?!) example of Action! programming.

Lightraces is a two player game based on the old 'Tron' idea of guiding a coloured line around a playfield without crashing into your opponents or your own trail. This version, however, is a cut above all other versions I have seen, for a start it is in 3D and the playfield scrolls in all directions. Also when your opponent is not close to you the screen splits into two sections, *a la* Ballblazer and each player has their own display. This is perhaps the most impressive part of the game; the split appears instantly with no flickering or distortions. Apart from this feature the graphics and sonics can best be described as functional. As a two player game it will keep you happy for a good few hours. One to put on your list if you have a friend to play it with!

Barkonid, as you might expect from the title, is a clone in the mould of the classic Breakout/Arkanoid, unfortunately not a good one. Movement is slow and the graphics/sonics are poor. A poor selection of colours (purple and brown) add to the lacklustre appearance. For me this is a very poor attempt to clone Breakout; the gameplay is all too monotonous and slow. I'm sure the original Breakout played better, and even several type-in listings I have played are more fun. I am forced to say once again this is a "no-no".

Giga-Blast is a horizontally scrolling shoot-em-up, and quite a nice one too. The graphics are good and the sounds do their job. There's not much that can be said about it really, for shoot-em-up lovers this is

one that should be added to your list. It is perhaps the best of the four mhs-studios games reviewed here. However, there is one drawback, it refused to load on my XF551, booting it on my (standard) 1050 did however result in a perfect load. A few games do have this problem, the most noticable ones are the vast majority of the Databyte games and Flight Simulator II. It is more than likely due to the copy protection on the software reading the speed of the disk rotation; standard 1050s rotate at 288RPM while XF551s rotate at 300RPM! Nice one Atari!

Most of these games came with their original (small) German manuals and an English translation sheet, and most employ the copy protection method of asking you to enter a code from the instructions before the game will run. These codes are printed in red which is hard to photocopy and hence is one of the better methods of copy protection though not entirely safe! It's unfortunate, but I have to say overall these games fail to deliver the goods, in parts they show signs of class and Giga-Blast is a competent game, Lightraces is not bad for a two player game, but Plots and Barkonid are really poor. I don't like rubbishing software, but when a game is c**p I will tell you.

Well that's about all from me, I hope to be back next time with more articles, one of them will hopefully be "the World's Worst Atari software", will any of the mhs-studios games be amongst that list......?

QUICK Tutorial Part 3

by Dean Garraghty

Last time we looked at string handling and ARRAYs. This time we will look at some simple graphics programming.

Producing graphics in QUICK is just as simple as it is in Basic. In fact it is *easier* in QUICK because of QUICK's built-in advanced techniques, such as the very useful Blitter, which will be demonstrated later in this tutorial.

QUICK contains all the graphics commands found in Basic, along with quite a few more. The commands are nearly the same as in Basic, except that the syntax is usually slightly different to fit in with QUICK's way of doing things. Most commands are already available, but some have to be INCLUDEd in from the GRAPH.LIB library.

Let's jump straight in and look at some simple code in Basic and QUICK:

Basic	QUICK
5 GRAPHICS 8	MAIN
7 COLOR 1	CLOSE(6)
10 PLOT 5,5	OPEN(6,28,8,"S:")
20 DRAWTO 20,20	COLOR(1)
30 DRAWTO 10,100	POS(5,5)
40 DRAWTO 150,0	DRAW(20,20)
	DRAW(10,100)
	DRAW(150,0)
	ENDMAIN

The Basic program should be quite obvious. We simply change to graphics mode 8, set the colour register to 1 (so that we can actually see something happen!), plot a point at 5,5, and then draw some lines to various parts of the screen. Not the most stunning of programs! The QUICK program is very similar. There is one major difference here between Basic and QUICK. In Basic you can simply change the graphics mode with the GRAPHICS command. In QUICK it isn't quite as easy. This is because QUICK's GRAPHICS command is not actually part of the QUICK language. It is, however, available in the GRAPH.LIB library. Normally we would have to INCLUDE this library and use the command from there. But, we only need one command from it, and in order to speed things up and to save memory, I have simply done it the way that the library would do it. All we need to do is to open the screen as channel 6, with some parameters to tell the computer which mode we want. The 28 and 8 were simply calculated by going through the code for GRAPHICS in the library file, and working out the numbers from there. You don't have to worry where the 28 and 8 come from. So, this line in the QUICK code effectively changes to mode 8. We CLOSE the channel before OPENing it again as another graphics mode. When you write some graphics programs of your own, you may find it easier to just use the GRAPHICS function in the library file.

You should now know how to actually get some graphics on the screen. Now I'll show you how to move parts of the screen around using Blitter! This isn't as hard as it sounds, and you should have no problems using it yourself! For this example I will only give an example in QUICK, because these features go way beyond anything Basic can handle! In this example, I will show you how to draw a set of concentric circles using

the CIRCLE function found in GRAPH.LIB, then how to "cut" it out into memory, and then how to "paste" it back on the screen in a number of positions. This is made trivial by the built-in commands CUT and PASTE. Here's the program:

```
INCLUDE
[
  D1:GRAPH.LIB
]
BYTE
[
  R
]
MAIN
  .GRAPHICS(24)   ;GRAPHICS 8+16 FOR NO TEXT WINDOW
  COLOR(1)        ;SO WE CAN SEE SOMETHING HAPPEN!
  R=1             ;FIRST RADIUS HAS VALUE 1
  REPEAT
  .CIRCLE(100,50,R)  ;DRAW LOTS OF CIRCLES WITH SAME CENTRE
  ADD(R,3,R)         ;ADD 3 TO VALUE OF R (RADIUS)
  UNTIL R=40
  CUT(60,10,140,90,30000)    ;CUT OUT OUR CIRCLES
  PASTE(0,150,100,30000)     ;PASTE CIRCLES BACK TO VARIOUS
  PASTE(0,150,0,30000)       ;PARTS OF THE SCREEN
  PASTE(0,20,100,30000)
ENDMAIN
```

I have put some comments in the program to give you some idea as to what each line is doing. When you type in the program, you can miss out all the comments (everything after the ;) if you want to. Also, you can change the INCLUDE to be D8:GRAPH.LIB if you have a RAMdisk and first copy the GRAPH.LIB file to it. The best way to do this is to load the LIB file from the editor. Select save (control S), and then do SHIFT 8. Then just press return and it's copied! Having the LIB file in the RAMdisk will speed up compilation enormously!

Now let's break the program down and look at each bit in turn. This time we are using more facilities offered by GRAPH.LIB so we may as well use the GRAPHICS function. In this case we set the mode to 24, which is mode 8 with no text window. Next we set the colour register to 1 so that we can actually see something happen! I have set up a BYTE variable R, which will be used to hold the radius. This first gets set to 1. Now we draw a series of concentric circles from a point 100,50. It will first do this with a radius of 1, which will draw a tiny circle in the middle. The next line adds 3 to the value of R. Here we are saying add 3 to R and put the result back in R. The equivalent Basic code would be R=R+3. So, the next circle will have a radius of 4, the next 7, then 10 and so on. I have used a REPEAT...UNTIL loop which stops when R gets to 40.

Now the fun bit comes! The next line cuts out a section of the screen and copies it into memory. CUT only works by cutting out a rectangular section of the screen, so I have chosen 60,10 for the upper left of the section to cut, and 140,90 for the lower right point. I chose these numbers to represent the maximum and minimum X,Y points with the maximum radius of 40. Don't worry if you can't work this out! We have to give CUT a memory address where it can start storing the part of the screen we have cut. Decimal 30000 is usually a safe bet. Next we PASTE the cut part of the screen to three other parts of the screen by just giving an upper-left X,Y point to paste back to, along with the memory

address where we have it stored. The first number (0) simply means copy as normal. A 1 would do an OR-mode copy. Check page 19 of the QUICK manual for details of this.

This article should have given you some idea of how to produce graphics in QUICK. Next time I'll be back with more, but I'm not sure what exactly!

DIGITAL EDITOR V3.6   (PD140)

Reviewed by Alan Hitchen

Digital Editor (DE) is a DTP program originally created in September 1987 by Atari Club Celle and V2.0 is still available as PD100. V3.6 is a highly modified and much improved version created by Tom D'Ambrosio in October 1990. It uses Turbo Basic and so will only run on an XL/XE machine.

On bootup, after the introduction, you are presented with a title screen created with DE, which is accompanied by the theme from High Noon. Next is the main menu. Select Editor to get started on creating your masterpiece.

The work screen is blank and is headed by a single line telling you what font is being used. If you have Superman's power of telescopic vision then you may be able to see the almost invisible cursor, it marks the upper left corner of the character. Any 9 sector font can be loaded (16 are supplied) and used to create normal or double height 40 column text. A fixed 80 column font can also be used in normal or double height. Text can also be imported from a word processor, in 80 column mode only, single or double column. Two sample Atari Writer files have been included to show you how. Graphics can be added anywhere on the screen in the form of 'photos'. These are icons cut from a Graphics 8 picture, 23 ready made PHO files are supplied. The completed screen is saved as a 59 sector PGE file and five PGE files have been included for you to study.

The Converter program will change the PGE file into a standard 62 sector Micro Painter file that can be printed out. It also cuts 'photos' from pictures or can turn 'photos' back into pictures for further editing.

The Graphics section is a Graphics 8 drawing facility in compiled Turbo Basic. It can be used to create 'photos' or full size pictures. Forty column text from any font can be added to the picture.

The Magmaker creates a program that will display a collection of PGE files as an on disk newsletter. It needs Turbo Basic to run.

Magmaker 62 will do the same to display 62 sector PIC files.

Hardcopy is a printer dump provided for 1029 users. Its capabilities are unknown.

Billboard by Chris Wareham is provided for Epson and compatible printers. It is a modified version that supports Turbo Basic and subdirectories, as does DE. The completed pages, when converted into PIC files, can be printed out just as you like, even sideways. If you have trouble with this option check line 1370, if the last statement reads IF UPR=N2 THEN 18, change 18 to 1860 and sideways printing will now work. Up to eight pages can be put on to one sheet but it will be hard to read, four pages to the sheet is the recommended format.

In conclusion I can say that this is a very good attempt to bring Desk Top Publishing within reach of the 8-Bit user. Its many features can cause confusion but a huge tutorial is provided to assist you. Happy printing!

PD REVIEW (PD40)

by Alan Hitchen

The sad news about the demise of Atari Classics magazine reminds us of others who have fallen in the past. ANALOG was one such, but its programs live on. A collection of some of these, compiled by Mike Williams, is available from DGS as PD40.

After the introduction you are taken to DOS, as all but one program is a binary load file. The documentation supplied is brief, but sufficient to get you going.

First is ANALOG DATABASE, a very well presented program by BBK. Very easy to use, it allows the creation of up to 96 cards per ADB file, if you use the maximum content of 8 fields of 30 characters each. More cards are available if you use less content. Complete cards may be printed out down the page, or your selection of fields, in any order, are printed across the page.

FLOYD THE DROID GOES BLASTIN' by Page 6 stalwart Paul Lay. The title says it all, just blast everything, except the hearts. Terminally cute!

MULTICOPY by Charles Johnson is a good file copy program that eases the otherwise tedious chore when you need to rearrange more than one file.

LA MACHINE by Stephen Alpert, is a program that allows the creation of four colour pictures that can be animated. Four or six frames can be created which are then flipped in quick sucession to produce the illusion of movement. It loads complete with an example six frames of a talking toilet! Also included is COMPUTER, a sample four frame animation of, surprisingly enough, a computer.

SLITHER is yet another snake in a maze, eat the pills and avoid your own ever-lengthening tail game, not one of the best, but not the worst either.

DISKFILE is a basic program that allows you to add comments to identify the cryptic entries in a standard disk directory. This information is stored in the otherwise unused sectors on an enhanced density disk, 1025 upwards.

DISKFILE.COM reads the information created by the above program and should be used as an autorun file with the commented disk. This program will still work on an uncommented disk, of enhanced or single density, where it will provide a neat display of directory information on bootup.

DEATHZONE by Steve Hillen, is a nice shoot 'em up in the Encounter mould, blast the spheres that come straight at you before they blast you.

BBK MONITOR allows you to assemble code, dissassemble with optional print facility, do Dec to Hex conversions, change memory contents or use the built-in DOS facilites. Just the thing for the serious programmer.

SPELLER is a spell checker program that initially creates a 26 word dictionary called words. As you check your text files selected words are added to the dictionary, or a whole file can be incorporated if correct. Also included is a Speller maintenance program that enables you to tidy up the dictionary if required.

The last two programs require a translator to work on the XL/XE machines so TRANSXL is provided. This is a very good program that gives you the choice of an alternative character set, faster maths functions and can use the dormant 4K of RAM situated above Basic on the XL/XE (C000 to CFFF).

Another disk containing a selection of games from ANALOG, with some others from ANTIC and one from ATARI USER, is PD106. This compilation comes from Bibliotheque Cenacle in France and therefore the documentation is in French, but the games are easy to get the hang of anyway.

Side one contains the following six basic games. They are run from a menu from which the docs can be read or printed out.

BASIC BURGER: Make burgers and avoid the nasties. SPYPLANE: Traverse the twisting caverns and avoid the laser defences. ESCAPE FROM EPSILON: Traverse the alien corridors on foot and avoid the pitfalls. PROGRESSIVE JACKPOT: A joystick controlled fruit machine, watch the jackpot increase as you play. LUNAR PATROL: Guide your spaceship through the caves to the fuel dumps against the forces of gravity and inertia. RAFFERTY RUN: A two player game, collect the gold coins and change the maze to frustrate your opponent.

Side two has the following 13 machine code games run from Super Loader V5.0.

AVALANCHE: Change the colours of the pyramid and avoid the falling rocks. BACTERION!: For one or two players, stop the Bacterions stealing your crystals. BONK: Pick up the diamonds, avoid the nasties and the electrified walls. CANYON: A two player game, guide your planes through the twisting canyons. GUNPOWDER CHARLIE: Clear the screen of bombs while avoiding the rockets. DEMON BIRDS: Shoot the birds while avoiding the meteorites and quicksand. FROGGIE: Help the frog across the busy road and river. INSECTS: Keep your garden clear of pests, shoot the lot! LIVEWIRE: For joystick or paddle, shoot the invaders on a 3-D grid. LUNAR DEFENDER: Keep the Moon clear of invading UFO's, the Earth is depending on you! NORDIC SKI: Guide your man safely down the heavily wooded slope. OLYMPIC DASH: The 100 metre dash for two players, very boring. RAINSTORM: Avoid the raindrops but collect the $ symbols.

HANDY HINT

by Alan Hitchen

I suppose most people know how to read a text file from DOS by copying it to the screen. Enter C (RETURN) FILENAME.EXT,E: (RETURN), use CONTROL-1 to pause as required.

But did you know you can reverse this procedure to write a text file from DOS? Enter C (RETURN) E:,D:FILENAME.EXT (RETURN). You can now enter your text. Hit RETURN to end a line and CONTROL-3 to end the file.

THE WORST ATARI SOFTWARE - VOTE NOW

By Dean Garraghty

For next issue, Richard Gore will be writing an article headed "The World's worst Atari software". In this he hopes to tell you what software to avoid. This will be split in to two catagories: games, and non-games. However, we have decided to let you vote on what you believe are the worst programs in these two catagories. Here's how:

You can select 3 programs in each catagory, E.g.

Games	Non-games
1. XYZ blaster game	1. XYZ utility
2. ABC shoot-em-up	2. ABC programming language
3. XXX maze game	3. XXX spreadsheet

You should number your choices 1 to 3, where 1 is the worst of the lot, and 3 is the least bad of the three!

Simply write out your choices on a piece of paper, and then send them to DGS. You don't have to give your name, but you can if you want to. You should only vote for commercial software, NOT PD and Shareware programs. PD stuff wouldn't be able to compete *on par* with more expensive software. The non-game catagory covers everything that is not a game of some description. This includes such things as word processors, databases, spreadsheets, languages, utilities, art packages, etc.

From past experience we know that as soon as we ask our readers to do something, they don't! Response to requests for reader input has traditionally been pathetic, so come on folks - get your lists sent to us! The closing date for your votes is 18th June 1994.

RAMDISK by Alan Hitchen

A RAMdisk on a standard 64K XL/XE is possible if you do the following. Boot up DOS 2.5 with Basic then POKE 1802,PEEK(1802)+128. Press RETURN then RESET and call DOS. Check the directory of D8: it will read 000 free. Format D8: and look again, it will now show 499 free but only 101 sectors are actually available.

If you want to run DUP.SYS and MEM.SAV from D8: go back to Basic. POKE 5439,56, return to DOS, you can now write the DOS files (delete DOS.SYS) and MEM.SAV to D8:. You now have instant DOS plus 30 sectors are left for your own use.

Location 1802 is the drive allocation byte, this would normally be set to 3 indicating D1: and D2: are available, adding 128 activates D8:. Location 5439 tells DOS where to find the DUP.SYS and MEM.SAV files and is normally set to 49 for D1:, 56 changes this to D8:. These locations would automatically be changed by RAMDISK.COM on bootup with a 130XE or expanded machine.

What seems to happen is that DOS searches for the extra RAM and finds the 16K of shadow RAM under the Operating System, this exists from 49152 upwards. However, 53248 to 55295 is used by GTIA, POKEY, PIA and ANTIC and is unavailable. This leaves 14K or 112 sectors, less a deduction of 13 sectors for the directory etc., should leave 99 sectors free for use. Where the extra two sectors come from I don't know.

S.A.M.S SHOW REPORT

By Dean Garraghty

On 16th April 1994, it was show time again. A show in April? Yes! This year Sharward Services decided to hold a second show to be called the Spring All Micro Show at Bingley Hall, Stafford.

At the usual time of 5a.m we all started off from the suburbs of Doncaster and set off for Stafford. This is the first time we have exhibited at a show in April, and driving down was very odd for us -- it was light! It's amazing how different things look in when it's light. Doing the journey in the light made it seem more amazing how we actually do it in the dark in November! It really is a complicated set of turn-offs, junctions, and un-lit country lanes. Anyway, on with the report!

We arrived at Bingley Hall at 7a.m on the dot, but in usual style the exhibitors didn't actually open the side entrance until about 15 minutes later (they claim to open it at 7a.m!). Sat waiting in the van really made us more aware of some of the dodgy looking outfits that exhibit at the show. Clapped out ex-post office vans, cars with boxes shoved in the back, and people transferring stuff from one car to another and then dissappearing!

Anyway, at 7.15 the door opened and we drove in. Not far to drive this time, because we were on stand 9 on the back wall near the side door. A few minutes after arriving and getting out of the van, I noticed that we didn't seem to have a power socket, even though I had paid for one. Quickly finding an "official" I complained. He came over and pointed at the wall. "What's that?", he said. "That's next door's power supply", I replied. "Well, that's yours too", he replied in sarcastic tone. It turns out that they wanted me to share a power outlet with TWAUG on the next stand. Now this didn't sound like a good deal to me. If I'm sharing a power supply, then surely I should share the cost? I put this to the guy, and got a load of miserable excuses and sarcasm. Although I am a calm and easy going sort of guy 99% of the time, there are occasions when I am forced to lose my temper, and this was one of them. I protested in less than repeatable tone, only to be greated by further sarcasm and a feable attempt at humour, which just made me lose my temper even more. You must understand that we have to pay £30 for a power socket, so you can see my point! Anyway, he went off mumbling something as I mumbled insults back! Not the best of starts!

Unpacking the van and setting up was to take some time, but went ahead pretty much as planned, except when one of folding tables we brought down ourselves decided to collapse the minute we put anything heavier than a feather on it! "They just don't make them like they used to", we all agreed! Getting all the posters on the wall was to prove interesting as usual! NOTHING sticks to the walls in Bingley Hall! Blu Tak, masking tape, parcel tape, sellotape. None were any use! Also, we didn't have as much wall space as usual with only having a 12 foot stand, so some would have to go above the others. All eyes turned to Mike, who is the tallest of us all!

After unpacking we just had to wait for the rest of our helpers to arrive. First to arrive were Mike Broadhurst and Juy Springthorpe, who turned up at 8a.m. It took me about 2 minutes to sell poor old Mike £60 worth of stuff! Next to arrive were Mark and Paul coming from London. There we hit two snags. Firstly Mark was refused entry because

according to the security guard we weren't there! A quick chat with the guy put that one straight! Secondly, Paul who was driving had been injured when some fool crashed straight into the back of them while waiting at a junction. At first it seemed OK, but Paul had to go into Stafford to report the accident. However, I managed to sell him £10 worth of stuff before he went! (is there no end to my sales technique?!). Paul went off to report it, but didn't get back until mid-afternoon when he turned up in a neck brace. He had injured his neck quite badly, and was sent to the hospital for X-Rays. He was also put on pain killers, because he was told the injury would start to hurt badly. Amazingly, he kept on smiling, which just shows the dedication of all us people who still support the Atari. Get well soon!

All this had happened before we actually opened to the public! The doors opened at 10a.m when the public were let in. This time, there was a sudden surge of people coming through the doors, unlike last November! And, more importantly for us, they all had money to spend!

We had just aquired a load of used hardware and software just literally two days before the show, and we had it all piled on the stand at our usual bargain prices! We had a few disk drives at £45 each complete, some 800XLs at £20, a printer at £20, and datarecorders at £10 (including a rare XC11). About 75% of this lot was sold in the first hour! We had to find something else to put on the stand because it started to look bare! We were selling tapes 5 for £1, and used magazines at 20p each. Stacks of these were sold. We had about 150 tapes at the start, and about 20 at the end! Money was coming in rapidly!

Our promotion for the day was a pack of the last 3 issues of the News-Paper for £2 the set. We had about 60 sets to clear, but we hit the same problem as last year trying to sell them. We only sold about 15 sets. People would take some to look at and then say "no" 5 minutes later. What were they looking for? Why didn't they want them? Who knows?! Hopefully at least some of the people who took a set will subscribe.
We also had our usual £1 a disk special offer running on P.D disks. As usual though, we sold very few. Around 30 in fact, which is about average. I can't understand why we don't sell more at £1 a disk!

Unfortunately, we sold very little of our usual product range of commercial software. I think people were more interested in buying the one-off pieces of used hardware and software we had for sale. We did, however, sell more copies of the Jawbreaker/Mousekattack packs than we had hoped for! We didn't, however, sell any copies of Digi-Studio this time!

That's what we were doing. Now on to what the other Atari lot were up to.
Next door to us on the left were TWAUG. They had quite a bit of used hardware on the stand, including some disk drives. They also had back issues of their newsletter available, and their PD library. They were also selling some ex-software blank 5.25" disks for £1.60 per 10. They turned out to be complete sets of MS-DOS 4 disks!

Next door to us on the right were Page 6. They had mounds of brand new tapes and disks, books, and back issues of Page 6. They were also duplicating P.D disks at the show.

Gralin International had a few good deals available. They had bundles of old APX tapes, 10 for 50p! Not bad for 5p a tape! They also had bundles of cartridges, and some hardware. They had 1050 disk drives for £45 (drive only) or £55 complete. They also had some non-working disk drive mechs for a few pounds each, and some 800XL PCBs for a couple of pounds each. I also heard they had some copies of SpartaDos 1.1 (disk only) for 50p! Some good bargains to be had here! Gralin also had their usual product range available, consisting mainly of ex-2 bit Systems products!

Unfortunately, NOSAUG were unable to attend. An empty stand with a letter from Stuart Murray explaining the situation occupied the NOSAUG space.

Micro Discount again had KE-Soft and A.N.G taking up part of their stand. M-D only had software this time, and none of their usual mounds of ex-Atari wharehouse hardware. This is because Derek was in Germany all week and didn't have much time to prepare. They also had some one-offs like Replay for £5!

Kemal from KE-Soft came over to talk to us, and Richard Gore tried desperately to sell him copies of some new software he has released (see Richard's advert in this issue). Let's just say that Kemal wasn't thrilled! "You can always tell when somebody doesn't care less. They pick their nose and look at the next stand!", I commented as Kemal did just that! However, he did seem interested in Alien Blast, which pleases me because I have a financial interest in it!

Also in attendance at the show were LACE (London Atari Computer Enthusiasts). Their main news of the day was that they have started a BBS which has a mainly Atari 8-bit flavour. Full details of this can be found elsewhere in this issue.

There was a total of 83 stands at SAMS, the most ever at an AMS show! You could buy just about anything! Mike managed to get conned into buying an over-priced RLL Hard Disk for his slowly dying Amstrad PC/386. I also managed to get conned with an I/O card for my PC. It only cost £2 though, so I didn't lose much!

Also available were disks, boxes, mouse mats, more disks, joysticks, etc., etc. You could get anything! You could also get loads of electronics items, and satellite stuff. Some extremely iffy looking Sky TV cards were available allowing you to get free Sky TV. Highly illegal, but the guy ran out of them anyway!

As 4p.m approached, we started to pack the van. This time we were actually going back with less than we came down with! The drive back was very nice. We had sold a load of stuff, and the sun was shining!

This time the show was very worthwhile for us. We actually made a profit, which is extremely rare! I think a show in April is a very good idea. The weather is a lot better (the sun was out all day long during the show!), the days stay light longer, and people seem to have more money. There will also be another SAMS show next April, as well as AMS8 THIS November. Jot the dates down now: AMS8 will take place on Saturday November 12th 1994. The next SAMS will take place on Saturday April 15th 1995. They will both be at Bingley Hall, Stafford (the usual venue!). Come and see us at both of them!

Thanks must go to the following people for helping out on our

stand for no pay! Richard Gore, Mike Watson, Mike Broadhurst, Juy
Springthorpe, Mark Keates, and Paul Saunders.

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Tyne&Wear Atari User Group - TWAUG, P.O. BOX 8, Wallsend, Tyne&Wear,
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London Atari Computer Enthusiasts - LACE, 47 George Crooks House,
New Road, Greys, Essex, RM17 6PS, ENGLAND. Phone: (0375) 374280.

Micro Discount, 265 Chester Road, Streetly, W.Mids, B74 3EA, ENGLAND.
Phone: 021-353-5730. Fax: 021-352-1669.

Page 6 Publishing, P.O. BOX 54, Stafford, ST16 1DR, ENGLAND. Phone:
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PD REVIEW

by Alan Hitchen

The latest type of program to hit the 8-Bit scene is the 'Sound
Tracker', designed to play MD8 music files converted from MOD files
originally created on the ST/Amiga. The latest version to arrive from
Germany is FAMPY V2.3 from Wolfgang Freitag of Friday Software. It is a
Shareware program with a fee of 10DM, which is approx $6 or £4. It is
available from DGS, as PD172, at the usual rates plus 30p to cover the
cost of printed instructions. This was necessary as there was no room
left on the disk for documentation files.

On boot-up the first screen allows selection of XF551 or 1050 mode;
true Double Density disks can be handled. Next to load is an impressive
title screen in the Euro Demo style, complete with a scrolling message
in German, and a high quality percussive soundtrack. The next screen is
a list of the program capabilities in German. It can handle a 56K file
on a 64K machine, 120K on the 130XE. Files larger than this are rare,
but the program will support another 64K of RAM above the XE limit on
expanded machines.

Flip the disk to load one of the four MD8 files supplied, a total of
1020 sectors of music. They will all run on a 64K machine. As they play
a logo and a PMG representation of the music pattern is displayed.
Play speed can be adjusted to best suit the particular sample loaded.

The proof of the pudding is, as they say, is in the eating. The sound
quality has been described as equalling that of tape or CD, is this the
case? Well, frankly, no, but given the constraints of the 8-Bit machine
it does pretty well. The sample quality most closely resembles MW radio
reception, low in volume, slight distortion and background hiss. The
musical content is a matter of personal taste and I didn't particularly
like the tunes provided. However, other MD8 files are available from
Friday Software and other sources like Micro Discount. DGS has more
files available on PD167 and 168. These disks also have alternative
player programs.

Friday Software has another musical offering in the Public Domain and
is also available from DGS. The SMALL DEMO (PD165) is not as small as
its name would suggest. It opens with a title page, nice music, and a
scrolling message in English. Next the main menu offers a choice
between the Synthy Demo, 3D Demo, Simple Demo, Stern Demo or Music
Menu. As each selection is hilighted a different tune from Las Vegas
Casino is played, a nice touch.

The Synthy Demo offers a rainbow screen and music as it displays
instructions for playing the good quality sampled synthesiser track.

The 3D Demo has music from BMX Simulator to accompany a wire frame
graphic moving against a starfield. It also features a multi-coloured
scroll in English and a vertically scrolling background.

The Simple Demo has a flashing abstract picture and music in honour of
ABBUC, simple but effective. It also has the inevitable scrolling
message in German with controllable speed.

The Stern Demo has two selectable tunes. The graphics are of a
spaceship jinking about, in order to avoid blue and pink meteorites.
It also has a pausing scroll in English.

The Music Menu is in the same format as the main menu and plays
different tunes from Draconus as each selection is hilighted. The three
selections of Cracked Music offers a choice of 30 tunes taken from a
variety of games and demos. Samples allows you to play six different
drum samples from the keyboard. The Digi Music selection is an 85K
sample converted from the ST and is entitled "Scoobydab". This is an
excellent track with a better sound quality than those provided with
Fampy. This demonstrates that some samples are better than others.

The size of the Digi Music file means that it will only run on a 128K+
machine. However, 64K users have not been forgotten. Flip the disk and
re-boot and you will find a 33K Digi music bonus. This is heralded with
yet another scrolling message and an interesting jangly tune. This
rounds off yet another top quality European demo, proving that there is
still life in the old 8-Bit dog yet.

TLTTF BBS

by Dean Garraghty (and Algie Gray)

Since the City BBS in Birmingham closed a while back, there has been no
Atari 8-bit BBS in the UK. Until now, that is! At the SAMS show in
April, Algie Gray (of LACE) excitedly shoved a sheet of paper in my
hand and told me about his new BBS for the Atari. It is called The Land
That Time Forgot (or TLTTF for short!). The amazing thing is that it
runs on a 130XE! It isn't dedicated 100% to the Atari 8-bit, but the
Atari has its own section.

TLTTF can work at speeds of between 300 and 2400 b.p.s. Technically,
the BBS would be able to work at speeds of up to 14,440, but they
decided to stop at 2400. There are reasons for this, but they aren't
really important. TLTTF is being networked with America and the Atari
EuroNet. Message bases currently networked include: Atari Classic,
ST/TT/Falcon, IBM-PC, C64/Amiga, Jaguar/NES/Sega, SaleNet, and EuroNet
[IAN]. It also has a message base and file area dedicated to Sinclair
computers. It is hoped that further 8-bit computers will join soon.

TLTTF is completely free to use, you do not have to pay any
subscription fee. You only have to pay BT for the cost of your call!

Logging on to TLTTF is either very easy or quite hard, depending on
when you try to log on. Firstly, to log on you will need a Modem
(obviously!), some means of interfacing it with your computer (E.g. an
850 interface or a P:R: Connection), and a suitable terminal program
(E.g. DeTerm). TLTTF supports ASCII, ATASCII, VT52, and ANSI colour
terminals. ATASCII mode is best when logging on from an 8-bit Atari.
Here is the only bit of technical jargon you will need to know: you
must set your terminal paramaters to 8 data bits, no parity, and 1 stop
bit (called 8N1). This is the most common setting, and most terminal
programs will default to this (DeTerm does).

TLTTF is connected to a private phone line, and this is where it *can*
get complicated! Between 8pm and Midnight, the BBS is connected
directly to the phone line, and any calls placed during these hours
will get straight to the BBS. This is the best time to log on. During
Midnight and 8pm, the BBS shares the phone line with a voice phone
(what we usually call a telephone!) via a fax switch. The fax switch
tries to work out if the incoming call is a modem calling, or somebody
wanting to speak to somebody. It can detect a modem in two ways.
Firstly, if your modem sends out a calling tone after it has finished
dialling, then the fax switch will detect this and route the call to
the BBS. Secondly, if it detects the DTMF tones for 33 then the call
will be routed to the BBS. If nothing is detected, then after 5 seconds
the voice phone starts to ring and you've messed up!

All this heavy jargon basically means that if you want to call the BBS
outside the hours of 8-12pm then you must be able to use tone dialling,
or your modem must be able to send a calling tone. If your modem is
tone dialling, then set your dial string to ATDT0819601605,33. The
comma provides a pause which gives the fax switch time to answer the
call before the 33 is dialled. You could dial manually with a tone
dialling phone or use a tone pad.

All you need now is the phone number, which is: 081-960-1605.

Right, that's what it is and how to log on, but is it any good? Yes, it

is! I've had a few log ons now, and I found it easy to use. Everything is menu controlled, so you don't have to learn any complex commands. It also runs suprisingly quickly for an 8-bit-based BBS.

You have the facility of leaving mail messages for other users of the BBS, including the Sysop (System Operator for those who don't know!). You can also put messages on the EuroNet and the Atari Classic message base, which will probably be read by people using BBSs in other countries that are somehow linked to TLTTF (or linked to something that links to something that links to TLTTF as it usually happens!). This would allow you to put questions to other Atari users, and hopefully get an answer. Very useful! There is also plenty of free software to download!

We should all thank Algie for setting up TLTTF. If you have questions relating to it, then call Algie on the same number in the early evening before 8pm.

THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT

081-960-1605
300-2400 8N1